

## New-York Daily Tribune

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1863.

**To Correspondents.**  
No notice can be taken of anonymous communications. Whatever is intended for insertion must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer, and be forwarded to the Editor, but no communication will be published unless the name and address of the writer be given. We cannot undertake to return rejected communications. All business letters for this office should be addressed to "The Tribune," New-York.

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Single copy, 5 cents.  
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Pay year (12 issues) in advance.  
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## NEWS OF THE DAY.

## THE WAR.

The Richmond Engineer of the 17th Inst. says that our (the United States) Government has "abandoned every point excepting the treatment of negro prisoners." The truth is, our Government has not abandoned any point. It is known that Major-General Butler, who has supervised Gen. Merrell's, as the agent or medium for the exchange of prisoners, has no such instructions. The prisoners at Forts Norfolk and Mifflin and Point Lookout have been placed under his orders, and he is authorized to conduct the exchange, not for men and officers for equal rank, with those who are sent forward by himself. The object is to make an even exchange as far as the prisoners in the Rebel possession will admit, and, governed by humane motives, the effort will be made first to procure the release of those who have for the longest time been held as prisoners. Colored troops and their officers, in conducting the exchange, will be placed on an equality with other troops, and so of colored men in civil employment. The recent visit of Gen. Hitchcock to Fort Monroe was to confer with Gen. Butler, and to communicate to him the orders of our Government upon this subject. The object, it may be repeated, is to secure the exchange of an equal number of prisoners on each side, leaving all other questions for future determination, the excess being largely in our favor.

Charleston must be rather a lively place to live in just now. On the night of the 24th, Gen. Gillmore kept up a steady shelling, destroying a dozen buildings. All day on Christmas he dropped in his explosive compliments; one white man was killed, and one woman badly wounded, three firemen were crushed under falling walls, and eight or ten were less seriously hurt. All remained quiet at the hour of the 25th, when one Fort Sumter, 120 shells were fired at the city from five guns—three at Gregg's, one at Cummings Point, and one mortar. There had been an engagement on Johnson's Island between a light battery and the Union gunboats, which was a drawn fight. On the night of the 26th only four shells were sent into the city. The Rebels are trying to prevent Gillmore from erecting a new battery at the extreme end of Cummings Point. All this is Rebel news, and of course tells as little as possible against their side.

It is evident that the Rebels are systematically lying about the arrival of blockade runners at Wilmington. Every few days they start a story that fire, ten or more vessels came in on such a night, one of the last is that twenty-three ran safely in a single night. But intercepted correspondence states that "for a month (about all the month of November) not a vessel had entered that port, but very few are reported at St. Thomas, Nassau and Bermuda, as getting out or in, and the contraband speculators are sadly out of spirits. There is no doubt that the Rebel papers are keeping up a regular fire of lies to induce the credulous in England and elsewhere to continue the losing speculation, in the hope that now and then some vessel may manage to dodge in. But twenty-three in a night is simply false.

A letter from Morris Island thus speaks of the new Confederate war vessel recently noticed in our correspondence: "A new iron-clad ram, perhaps a third larger than the Atlanta, made her appearance in Cooper River a few days ago. She came down past Charleston with flags flying, rounded Cape Mifflin, fired a salute of four guns in broadside, and then returned. She made a stately appearance, had good proportions, with sloping lines and was decidedly the most formidable looking craft that the enemy have yet exhibited in these sacred waters."

The Rebel Congress seem to consider that their outrageous bill to conscript every soldier now in the field is to become a law, as matter of course. In view of such a result, Foote of Tennessee proposes that "whenever any part of the forces now in the field shall be re-conscripted, the battalions, regiments and companies shall be allowed to select their officers." Another member wants to cut this privilege down to the choice of line officers only.

The Richmond papers are said to be gloomy over the daring raid of Averell's cavalry upon their most important railroad, at Salem. It is not improbable that this raid was the cause which forced Longstreet to stop, while in full retreat, and fight for life in East Tennessee. With the road permanently broken, it would be utterly impossible for him to subvert his army in its present position.

John Morgan is advertising for men to make up another guerrilla force, and expects ere long to be in the saddle. The Southern papers are eloquent on his wrongs, and breathe nothing but revenge. It is to be hoped that he may once more try Ohio as a long-range place; it will not need penitentiaries to keep him safe. But he will not be likely to visit the Buckeye again.

We learn from Newbern, N. C., that the new oath of allegiance has been administered to a number of Rebel officers and soldiers who have recently come into our lines to accept of the pardon offered by President Lincoln. They bring intelligence from a large number in like situation, who intend to do likewise at the earliest opportunity.

The Rebel schooner Marshal J. Smith, laden with cotton and turpentine, and bound from Mobile to Havana, was captured recently off Mobile Bay, after a brisk chase, by the gunboat Kennecott.

Rebel dispatches say that Gen. Jo. Johnston has taken command of the Tennessee army, vice Hardee, who was in place of Bragg.

## NEWS FROM EUROPE.

The extra Cunard steamer Olympus, from Liverpool, Dec. 15, and Queenstown Dec. 16, arrived at this port yesterday morning, bringing two days later European news.

The privateer Alabama is reported to be off Java, and to have burned the American ships Whig and Acacia and Amanda.

According to a ministerial journal of Vienna, the Austrian Cabinet has dispatched a second note, positively refusing to send a representative to the European Congress proposed by the Emperor Napoleon. For this refusal Count Rechberg assigns the grounds that M. Drouyn de Lhuys has not supplied a clear and satisfactory programme of the subjects to be submitted for consideration, and that a Congress in which England is not represented cannot be attended with any durable results. M. Drouyn de Lhuys has addressed a circular to the diplomatic agents of France abroad, intimating that France wishes to discuss peacefully with as many of the European Powers as are willing the great European questions, notwithstanding the refusal of England and Austria to attend the Congress.

The Armstrong 600-pounder gun was tried on Dec. 11, at a range of 1,000 yards, against a floating target representing a section of the Warrior's side, and made short work of the mass of iron and steel opposed to it. The Times thinks that there has never, since the beginning of the great battle of guns versus plates, been "such a complete triumph" for the former.

The four German Powers intrusted by the

Federal Diet with the task of carrying out "Federal execution" in Holstein, have sent a summons calling on the Danish Government to evacuate the duchy within seven days.

England has now seven armor-plated iron ships afloat. The "Minotaur," a frigate of 6,244 tons, and intended to carry 30 guns of the heaviest calibre—was launched at Blackwall on Saturday.

## GENERAL NEWS.

The Union State Central Committee of California have resolved to call a State Convention to be held at Sacramento, between the 15th and 25th of March next, to choose delegates to the National Convention, the basis of appointment to be one delegate for every county, one for each 200 votes cast for Low, and one for fractions of 200 greater than one-half. All citizens, maintaining the Administration, favoring a vigorous prosecution of the war, and who voted for Low at the last election, are declared qualified to vote in electing delegates to the Convention. It was further resolved that the Union members of Congress from that State be requested to suggest to the Union National Committee the propriety of holding the National Convention at Gettysburg.

The deaths in New-York during the past week were 481—104 men, 105 women, 154 boys and 118 girls—a decrease of 22 from the mortality of the previous week, and an increase of 113 as compared with the mortality of the corresponding week of 1862. Of the deceased 235 were children under five years of age. The mortality by the principal diseases was as follows: Consumption, 76; erysipelas, 34; inflammation of the lungs, 30; scarlet fever, 32; diphtheria, 21; infantile convulsions, 29; typhus fever, 17; infantile marasmus, 15; inflammation of the brain, 14; typhoid fever, 13; disease of brain, 12. Death from external causes, 32.

The Rev. L. Ward Smith, formerly Adjutant-General of this State, died at Germantown, Pa., on the 22d inst. Mr. Smith was born in Rochester, from which place he went to the Assembly in 1849, and was appointed Adjutant-General of the State in 1851, serving until 1853, soon after which he assumed offices in the Episcopal Church. At the time of his death he was Rector of the Episcopal Church at Germantown.

Collins and McKenna, two of the Chesapeake pirates, were arrested and brought before the police magistrate at St. John, N. B., on the 28th. On application of their counsel, the examination was postponed for a week.

Gold was steady at 151½-151¾ throughout the morning. In the afternoon the quotation rose to 152½, where it remained at the close of business. Stocks upon the street were dull, but very firm. At the Stock Exchange fall prices were paid for all descriptions of shares and bonds. The week opens upon an active stock market, and more disposition is shown to buy for a rise than for a fall. The impression is strong among speculators that the New-Year will witness a strong upward movement, and there is an inclination shown to lay in anticipation, and to take the risk of an active New-Year market in the interval. At the Second Board the extreme prices of the day were not maintained in all cases, but the market closed firm, with a good demand for each and in all others. Money has been active at 7½ per cent, but at this rate borrowers on call have had little trouble in employing their money.

Our dispatches from Washington say that Chief Justice Taney was last night very ill, and not expected to survive until morning. He is nearly 67 years old, and has been Chief Justice of the Supreme Court since the death of John Marshall in 1836.

The Rebel Government have again stopped the exchange of prisoners, alleging that none more will be given until the United States Government shall recognize their laws with regard to negro soldiers and their officers, and furthermore concede all other points in dispute. They also refuse to deal with Gen. Butler, inasmuch as he has been outlawed by Davis's proclamation. As they have now fully taken their position, it may be that our Government will be compelled to stop throwing grass and try what virtue there may be in stones. The refusal to deal with Gen. Butler seems to have been decided on just about the time he stopped sending up provisions, clothing and medicines for our suffering soldiers. What has become of the immense supply we shall find out one of these days.

## PROGRESS OF FREEDOM.

The fact that a deputation of colored men were admitted to a recent meeting of the friends of State reconstruction in New-Orleans is more striking but not more significant than those which are reaching us from every part of the States reconquered from the Rebellion. Every day divides the South more and more completely between the Unionists who are for universal Freedom, and the Rebels, who are for eternal Slavery. The party of pro-Slavery Unionists grows "fine by degrees and beautifully less" whenever the National flag floats in triumph. Generals like Grant and Steele, McClelland and Sickles, who entered the service, desirous and confident of a "reconstruction" which shall restore Slavery to its old-time predominance in the Union, are now convinced that the only practical choice is a between a Union all Free and a partition of our country with the slaveholding Rebels; and they declare, as soldiers and patriots, for the Union and Free Labor. The rank and file of our armies having been mainly Republicans when they enlisted, needed no conversion to that faith; but those who did need it are fast opening their eyes. There are not to-day five per cent of the soldiers who have served the Union six months or over who desire or expect to see Slavery survive the downfall of the Rebellion.

That the quiet people of the revolted States, who have suffered everything but death from the Rebellion, and seen all the promises of its authors falsified by the approach of war and its desolations to their own firesides, when they were positively assured that all the fighting, if fighting there should be, would be confined to the North, should now seek to be rid of the demon who has ensnared them to their ruin, is but natural. There are thousands in the South who still cling desperately to the hope that the Rebellion will somehow succeed; but there are not an omnibus-load out of Kentucky who desire to see Slavery and the Union re-established. And even in Kentucky, all that is needed is concentration of effort by means of Organization. The loyal people, even there, are mainly hostile to Slavery as the primary cause of our perils and woes. And they will not much longer consent to be debarr'd from a free avowal of their convictions by a few would-be leaders and two or three bullying journals. They know what it is that made Breckinridge, John Morgan, and so many of their wilder young men, traitors to their country, and they do not intend that it shall poison another generation. In a little while they will have an organ; soon after, we trust, an organization; and next year will see the greatest Kentucky of

1861—whose chief newspaper vehemently railed at President Lincoln for calling out 75,000 militia to defend the Capital—wholly, unconditionally for the Union and its supporters, and against the Rebellion and its inciting cause.

Maryland is a full year ahead of Kentucky. Slavery is given up as a dead dog by all loyal people. When Reverdy Johnson, Thomas H. Hicks, and Thomas Swann declare for immediate Emancipation, you may be sure there are not many left standing by Slavery who even fancy themselves Unionists. The pro-Slavery organization of last year is given up; its leaders are out for Emancipation. There are not a hundred opponents of Emancipation left in the State who are not outright Secessionists.

Thus it is everywhere, from Little Delaware to the Rio Grande. There were always anti-Slavery men in the South; but their tongues were tied—their energies paralyzed by terror and despair. It has pleased Him who hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let the children of Israel go, to permit Slavery to dash itself headlong against the rock of American Nationality; and its skull is broken by the shock. So, "When this cruel war is over," our country will be truly, abidingly, "the Land of the Free."

## THE COLORED TROOPS.

The experiment of using colored men as soldiers has been more fairly and scientifically tested in the department under the command of Gen. Gillmore than in any other military division of our country. The result is valuable, decided, and satisfactory. The means employed were those dictated by military rules and policy, and, consequently, were those best calculated to attain all the objects proposed by the Government. It was proposed to ascertain practically the ability of the colored man to be a soldier. He had therefore been employed as a laborer, usefully and profitably to himself and to us. Many instances of bravery on his part encouraged the belief that to prove his capability, he needed only the opportunity. But it was answered, and truthfully answered, that it requires more than mere bravery to constitute a good soldier; and that while there was no prejudice against him as a laborer, there was a wide-spread antipathy to his being made a soldier, and that this antipathy greatly prevailed among our own white troops. It was thoroughly considered and appreciated by those who proposed the scheme, and by those to whom its execution was intrusted, that patience, candor, firmness, united with impartial justice, were chiefly to be relied upon in doing the work. The honest, even if groundless, antipathy of others to the colored man was to be dispipated and reconciled. In doing all this the colored man was looked to as the main and natural instrument by which it might and ought to be accomplished. He himself was to win his position as a soldier; and justice, not favor, was to confirm him in it when won. Nothing, therefore, was wished but a fair field in which he might show whatever quality of talents he possessed, and indicate whatever he was capable to attain with proper education. Under such treatment we had faith in his success. We thought the experiment in this spirit ought to be made. But we felt that it was a novel thing for our country, and that its practical results alone should, or could, justify its permanent adoption. The trial has been fairly and properly made, under the direction of Gen. Gillmore, in the Department of the South. The result is now before us. It is all that we hoped for—more than was expected in so short a time. The results, so far, may be stated as showing the capacity of our colored troops for nearly all branches of the military service; their present efficiency in the infantry tactics; the preference given by officers for their labor in engineering operations, and the encouragement given to educate them so as finally to embrace all the employments incident to the operations of war. But over and above all these, the most important fact is—and it is one which cannot be too deeply and accurately impressed on the public mind—that the colored soldier by thus proving himself capable and worthy, has already entirely overcome that antipathy which existed against him on the part of the white troops, who are not only reconciled to his adoption into the army of the Republic, but most enthusiastically admit the justice and propriety of his claim. In announcing this we know that we are stating the opinion of every General commanding in the army in the Department of the South. The weight to be given to this unanimous opinion of these Generals is enhanced when it is remembered that many of them doubted the present capacity of the colored man for any work beyond that of the laborer. But they are, one and all, soldiers and patriots, and Gen. Gillmore determined that the scheme of the Government should at once be submitted to a proper test. In this he had the hearty cooperation of the Generals in whose commands the colored regiments were placed. One of those regiments (the 1st South Carolina, Col. Higginson) was under the immediate care of Gen. Saxton; but the other four regiments are under Gen. Gillmore's eye on Morris and Folly (properly Folly) Islands. These troops are now regularly seen in the same line of battle with the white troops—on the march, on picket, and performing all the ordinary duties of the soldier. In the review at Beaufort, on the recent visit there of Gen. Gillmore, the regiment commanded by Col. Higginson maneuvered in the same field and line with the other troops, and with a precision fair for any raw troops; but most commendably so in men who until recently were slave field-hands. Then again, at a grand review at Morris Island on the 5th instant, the four colored regiments (including the celebrated 54th Massachusetts, late Col. Shaw's) were drawn up in the same line and maneuvered with the other troops. Gen. Gillmore, the General commanding, reviewed them, accompanied by the gallant and efficient Gen. Terry, of whose command these colored regiments constitute a part. In neatness of dress, cleanliness of arms and accoutrements, precision and celerity of movement, they favorably compared with any in the line. If there exists any idea of impropriety in the colored

regiments having been thus in the same line with the other troops, it is clearly not participated in by the white troops or their officers. Indeed, the cordial understanding between these regiments, and the evident appreciation of the merits of the colored by the other soldiers, and the amity with which they treat each other on such occasions, were among the most pleasant and instructive phases of the review.

This is an impartial exposition of the real state of the colored troops in that department, and it may serve to correct the very erroneous statement on this subject made recently by one of our contemporaries. It is not true that the colored troops are treated, or have been treated, unlike soldiers. They are and have been required to do the work which soldiers should do, and which the white troops have also to perform. They receive the same treatment exactly. Gen. Gillmore is too just and too sagacious a man to treat the colored worse than the white troops, far that would degrade and discourage their officers; nor better, for that would spoil both, and discourage and disgust the white troops serving at their side. The orders of the General are and have been from the first that both should be treated in the same manner; that is, as soldiers; and this is well known to all the officers of the colored regiments. Those officers now feel that they are commanding men and soldiers. The colored troops have the same amount of instruction and drill, have regular guard-mountings and parades, and take their regular place with the other troops in all reviews. If the colored regiments have been drawn upon more heavily than others, it was because the engineers and quartermasters preferred them. We can see no reason why they should not be used in such way as to make their labor most efficient. It was proper that the experiment should be one of utility, and not a mere parade and idle pet show. Any other course would be doing the colored man injustice. Our impression is (and it is shared by the officers of those colored regiments) that the least intelligent of the colored troops should never be put in the ranks, for they seriously retard the progress of the great mass, and that those rejected as soldiers should be employed in the Quartermaster's Department.

We have every reason to be proud of the success that has attended this experiment. It has been one of great delicacy to those who had immediate charge of it. It has been fairly and manfully tried under the direction of an accomplished soldier and prudent and just man. This gratifying result and the manner in which it was accomplished, if not as popular or brilliant an achievement as the breaching of Sumter and the reduction of Wagner, is one for which we feel assured posterity will preserve in grateful remembrance and a liberated people cherish forever, the name of GILLMORE.

We submit the following report of Major T. B. Brooks, under whose immediate direction all the trenches, parallels and approaches to Wagner during its siege, were constructed. He is an officer of ability and long experience, having, also, assisted at the reduction of Pulaski. The forthcoming report will doubtless make known to the public very efficient service rendered by this officer at the sieges referred to.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE SOUTH, ENGINEER'S OFFICE, Folly Island, S. C., Dec. 16, 1863.  
GENERAL: In accordance with your instructions, I have the honor to submit the following statement relating to the amount and nature of the fatigue duty performed by the colored troops of this command, as compared with the white, in those portions of our recent operations against the defenses of Charleston Harbor, which were under my direction, viz: The defensive lines across Morris Island, the approaches against Fort Wagner, and part of the breaching batteries against Fort Sumter.

In the engineering operations, 35,000 days' work of seven hours each were expended, of which 3,500 were by engineer troops, and 30,000 by infantry, 3,500 days' work, being more than half of that performed by the infantry, and two-fifths of the whole, were by blacks, all being volunteer troops.

The whole of this work was done under a fire of artillery or sharpshooters, or both, and the greater part of it at night. My own observation, confirmed by the testimony of all the engineer officers who had the immediate superintendence of the work, proves that the blacks, as a rule, did a greater amount of work than the same number of whites; but the whites were more skillful, and had to be employed in the more difficult part of the work, comprising about one-fifth of the whole.

We found the black soldier more numerous than the white, but in a corresponding degree more docile and obedient, doing just what he was told to the best of his ability, but seldom with enthusiasm.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
T. B. BROOKS, Major, A. D. C. and Asst. Engr.

Major GEN. A. C. GILLMORE, Comd'g Dept. of South.  
Perhaps the enthusiasm which Major Brooks thinks is wanting—but of which certainly there was no lack when the Massachusetts 54th stormed Fort Wagner—will no longer be misused when the colored soldier is assured that the Government which accepts his services no longer asks him to fight with a halberd round his neck, and is just enough to pay him for risking his life for his country precisely what it pays to other men for performing the same duties.

## A PRESIDENTIAL DISCREPANCY.

From the N. Y. Herald.  
May 22, '63.—The idea, that greater strength can be concentrated upon him (Lincoln) than any other candidate, and that, under the aspect, that has been given to him by the friends of other candidates (Seward and Chase) both sides will naturally fall back on Lincoln as the compromise candidate.

May 23.—It is well known conservative views and inclinations, and his unquestioned honesty, patriotism and soundness of purpose in the prosecution of the war will render him to a great extent acceptable to thoughtful men of all parties.  
But let Gen. Grant advance a handsome victory at Vicksburg and let it be followed by a convention of calling down the colored quarters that the Rebellion will be ultimately crushed before the opening of our Presidential campaign, and the popular voice of a grateful country will enforce another term upon Abraham Lincoln.

May 26.—President Lincoln is a man upon whom all the Conservative elements of the country could be readily found.  
Let him be brought out, and the great body of the people will feel secure against the fearful designs of belated factions, and their revolutionary extremists, which otherwise are sure to come.  
A new Administration involving a new division of the spoils, in the midst of the business of this war, or pending the delicate work of a restoration of the Seceded States, would almost certainly involve the Government and the country in great embarrassment and confusion.  
President Lincoln, as the head of the Government, has the practical experience necessary to understand this war and its management in all its phases, and the work of restoring the Union at the end of the war.  
He, looking to their own safety, our financial and commercial men, whose material interests depend upon the preservation of law and order, should take the initiative in this important work of simplifying and securing the next Presidency against all revolutionary disturbances by bringing forward Abraham Lincoln for another term.

May 26.—Give us Abraham Lincoln for the next Presidency, and their "Presidential factions" powers of mischief are at an end—abolitionists, blackheads, Copperheads and all.

June 6.—If Mr. Lincoln should at once call out from his Georgia, and send him to fight, and see how

him and the country, he would stand an excellent chance of being re-elected himself.

Sept. 14.—At all events, President Lincoln holds the inside track for the Presidential succession, and, instead of following the Rebels any longer, it is clearly his intention that they shall follow him.

Oct. 1.—Lincoln believes, as we do, that the people have chosen him, and not Mr. Chase, "to boss this job," by which he means the restoration of the Union.

Oct. 5.—Nevertheless, Chase feels so confident that he is about to open his batteries upon "the boss" himself.  
We are afraid that Chase overestimates his own resources, and underestimates the President's powers of self-defense.

Oct. 9.—These Cabinet squabbles only tend to strengthen public confidence in the wisdom, honesty and energy of Mr. Lincoln.

Nov. 2.—In a word, we consider President Lincoln in the field for the succession; we consider him master of the situation.

Nov. 9.—In utterly rejecting them [the radical Abolition faction].  
He may not only secure a reelection, but a popular and election, as usually made, that of the second election of Gen. Jackson.

Nov. 21.—The news is in (Mr. Lincoln's) hands, and he will indeed be a conqueror if he cannot convince to win.

Dec. 15.—It is probable he will be overthrown by Mr. Chase as the Administration party candidate.

Dec. 16.—We have down to this day generally labored to strengthen the hands of the President; to apologize for or explain away his mistakes and delinquencies; to give him good advice, and to encourage him in well doing by constantly keeping before his eyes the formidable forces and resources at his command, and the imperishable glory which his reach from his faithful employment. We have stood by him through all the dark days of the war; but now that the Rebellion is fairly within his grasp, and when the next Presidency is coming in the foreground, Mr. Lincoln cannot complain if, as an aspirant for another term, he is rightly judged according to his deserts.

We say, then, that his administration has proved a failure, including his official advisers, his measures of legislation, and his conduct of the war.

Dec. 18.—We have had quite enough of a civil war. Mr. Lincoln has done nothing else worthy of praise, he has convinced the people that a civil war is not the man for a President during war times. It is undeniable that all the waste, extravagance, blunders, mistakes, bad management, and imbecility which have characterized the present Administration, are to be set down to the account of President Lincoln.

Dec. 21.—We abandon "Honest Old Abe" as a hopeless case. We have pulled him, we have praised him, and have helped him in every way, but he can get no good out of him. To use one of his own heavy words, he is a crooked stick that cannot be bent, and that will have to be broken.

Dec. 22.—Honest Abe Lincoln has been tried and found wanting. He has not the capacity to bring this to a speedy conclusion. And what have we gained by the present Administration? A practical joke for a President; a disordered and incompetent Cabinet; a war which might still have been honorably avoided—a gigantic and destructive civil war, which might have been ended within six months from the bombardment of Sumter, but which is destined, to all appearance, to go over as a legacy to the next Administration.

—Quoth the Rev. Dr. Watts to Gen. U. S. Grant, and whoever may be his successors in the fickle favor of the Sateau:  
"Ye living men! come view the ground  
Where you must shortly lie."

## A COMPARISON.

STATE OF THE MARKET, MONDAY, DEC. 10, 1863.  
AT NEW-YORK, AT 10 O'CLOCK, A. M.  
Gold, per dollar, 151 1/2-151 3/4; 151 1/2-151 3/4; 151 1/2-151 3/4.  
Sterling Exchange, per 100, 100 1/2-100 3/4; 100 1/2-100 3/4; 100 1/2-100 3/4.  
Wheat, per bushel, 65 1/2-65 3/4; 65 1/2-65 3/4; 65 1/2-65 3/4.  
The prices for Richmond are quoted from The Sentinel of that city; those from New-York, from the regular market reports. Commerce is unnecessary.

## FROM WASHINGTON.

Special Dispatch to The N. Y. Tribune.  
WASHINGTON, Monday, Dec. 28, 1863.  
CHIEF-JUSTICE TANEY DYING.  
Chief-Justice Taney is lying at his residence here at the point of death. It is not expected that he will survive the night.

VISIT TO POINT LOOKOUT.  
The President and Secretary of War returned to-night from a short visit to the encampment of Rebel prisoners at Point Lookout. It is understood that they satisfied themselves that not less than a thousand, or about a tenth of the whole number, are ready to enter the service of the United States.

SUFFERING OF THE FREEDMEN OF THE MISSISSIPPI.  
The President of the Western Sanitary Commission, Mr. Yeatman, has been here for the purpose of representing to the authorities the needy and suffering condition of the freedmen on the Mississippi, and of urging the immediate adoption of measures for their relief. It is understood that he has been directed, in conjunction with the special agent of the Treasury Department, Mr. Mellon, to make a thorough inspection of the abandoned plantations under lease, and report fully to Washington. He left here yesterday.

VOLUNTARY ENLISTMENTS UNDER THE LAST CALL.  
Late returns from the several States to the War Department indicate that at least one-third, and perhaps one-half, of the men under the last call will be raised by voluntary enlistments before the 5th of January. Maine, New-Hampshire, Rhode Island, Indiana and Illinois are expected to raise their full quotas, Massachusetts, Vermont and Iowa will not be far behind. Not as good progress has been made in Ohio and other Western States. In New-York and Connecticut recruiting is slow. Pennsylvania makes the poorest showing. The last weekly report from Ohio shows an aggregate of about 430 enlistments.

THE LIMITATION OF THE PAYMENT OF BOUNTIES.  
The clause in the act appropriating \$20,000,000, passed last week, prohibiting the payment of Government bounties after the 5th of January beyond the \$300 authorized by former laws, is considered a grave mistake at the War Office. The apprehension is that it will put an end to the enlistments of veteran volunteers, since State and private bounties, which will continue to be paid, will give recruits again a provoking and unjust advantage over them. An effort will be made upon the reconvening of Congress to remedy this.

THE EFFECT OF COMMUTATION.  
In States, such as Wisconsin and Michigan, in which the first draft is not yet completed, the Government will secure hardly any of the drafted men for service, commutation money being almost universally paid.

THE TAX ON WHISKY AND PETROLEUM.  
It is thought in quarters likely to be informed that the sub-committee of the Ways and Means will report after the recess, in favor of imposing a tax of 8¢ instead of 5¢ per gallon upon whisky. It is not so certain that the recommendation of the Secretary of the Treasury that this tax be laid upon stock in the hands of distillers or their agents will be adopted, and it is still less certain that the Secretary's proposition for laying the tax of ten cents upon crude instead of refined petroleum, the only other article covered by his draft of a bill, will be favorably considered. In what light the Committee or the House will on reassembling regard these proposed changes is matter of speculation. It may be said, however, that the decided probability is that the tax on whisky will be largely increased, and perhaps to the highest figure named.

THE COLORED TROOPS.  
Adj.-Gen. Thomas reports that Col. Hawkins' Brigade of 5,000 colored soldiers at Milliken's Bend is in excellent condition, and its commander avers that it can whip any 5,000 Rebels now in arms. Gen. Thomas thinks that by Spring there will not only be negroes enough in the field to guard the banks of the Mississippi its whole length, but also to give a large surplus for duty at other points or in the field.

AVAILS OF THE TAX LAW.  
From the monthly abstracts of collection returns coming down to June 30, 1863, which will be sent to the Public Printer in a day or two, from incomplete returns of a later date, and from the estimates made in the Bureau of Internal Revenue, we derive the following information as to the avails under some of the more important heads of the Tax law as it stands, and the probable receipts, should it be amended in accordance with the recommendations of the Department:

Estimates of income tax received during the year 1863 upon incomes of 1862, ten to twelve millions. To total amount collected on distilled spirits from Sept. 1, 1862, to Sept. 1, 1863, \$4,863,272 98; of which were collected in July and August, 1863, \$1,633,292 19, or at the rate of \$9,000,000 for the year, although these were full months.

On this basis the present tax would amount to \$10,000,000 per annum, and a tax of \$1 per gallon will yield more than \$10,000,000. The tax on ale, beer, and porter yields nearly \$2,000,000 at 60 cents per bbl. If the tax be raised to \$1 50 per bbl., the receipts will be \$5,000,000. Petroleum yields at present \$750,000 per annum, and with the proposed tax on crude, with no drawback, will yield nearly \$2,000,000.

Tobacco yields now something more than \$3,000,000 per annum. The frauds in this article have been enormous, and the revenue ought to have been \$8,000,000. The proposed tax of 25 cents per pound on the crop of leaf in 1863 will give about \$2,000,000, if a drawback be allowed on the quantity exported. If the plan of allowing no drawback be carried out, the tax on that crop will probably produce \$4,000,000, although the exports will be largely reduced.

In addition to this, the proposed tax on manufactured tobacco ought to bring in \$5,000,000. The old crop of 1862 now in the market cannot of course be subjected to any tax.

FROM CHARLESTON.  
From Charleston we learn that the U. S. Schooner Huron has captured an old river steamerboat, with three hundred bales of cotton, valued at \$100,000, while attempting to run the blockade below Charleston. The Rebels continue hard at work in their preparations to resist an attack.

Two deserters from Bragg's army came on board one of the vessels in Wassaw Sound. It is also said that ladies near one of the Rebel batteries waved their handkerchiefs as the monitor Nanuet approached the battery. The expedition planned by Gen. Gillmore for an attack upon Savannah was abandoned on account of the return of the Rebel troops who had been sent to reinforce Bragg, and during whose absence the attack was to have been made.

Admiral Dahlgren has had the monitors thoroughly scraped, and has one or two expeditions on foot, from which good results are anticipated.

PROMOTED.  
Surgeon Henry Capehart of the 1st Virginia Cavalry, formerly Medical Director on Gen. Standish's staff, has been promoted to the rank of Major, and is now in camp at New Creek, Western Virginia. Dr. C.'s knowledge of tactics is equal to his acknowledged ability as a surgeon, and the regiment are about reuniting under him as veteran volunteers.

RE-ENLISTMENT OF THE FIFTY-THIRD PENNSYLVANIA.  
The 53d Pennsylvania Volunteers, Col. McMichael, re-enlisted for the war and arrived in the city this evening on their way home to recruit. This regiment has participated in every fight of the Army of the Potomac, and leaves the field with 250 men.

RECRUITING NEGROES FOR QUOTAS.  
The War Department has refused permission to States to recruit negroes in this District and at Fort Monroe, with a view to recruiting them to the quotas of the States whence the recruiting officers are sent.